Visit to the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) facilities and Graduation Ceremony of the Category "A" Master of Science in Hydrographic Science at the University of Southern Mississippi, USA, 5 – 6 August

Contribution to the IHO Work Programme 2025.

Task 3.3.9.1

Maintain relations with KHOA for the management of Cat A Course at University of Southern Mississippi.

High level summary

- The IHO-Republic of Korea (ROK) Programme of Technical Cooperation remains the sole international initiative available to IHO Member States offering a sponsored IBSC-accredited Category “A” course in Hydrography.
- The Category “A” Master of Science in Hydrographic Science program at the University of Southern Mississippi has successfully renewed its IBSC certification for another six years.
- Through the high-caliber instruction at the University of Southern Mississippi, the Category “A” Master of Science in Hydrographic Science program has fostered a network of students who collaborate internationally and drive innovation in the field.

Details:

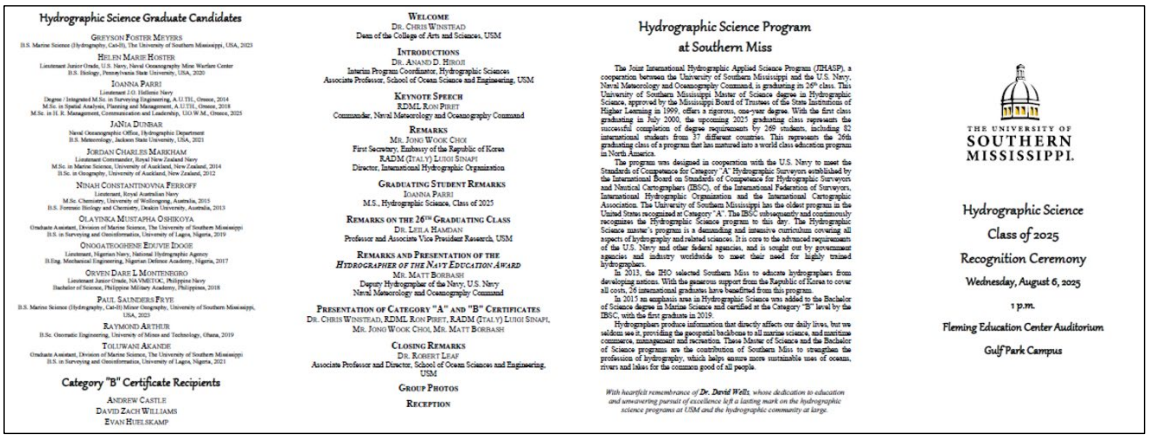
The Graduation (Recognition) Ceremony of the Category "A" Master of Science in Hydrographic Science and Category "B" Bachelor of Science in Marine Science (Hydrography) was held at the University of Southern Mississippi (USM), USA on 6 August 2025. Two students, Ms. Ioanna Parri from Greece and Mr. Onogateoghene Eduvie Idoge from Nigeria, graduated from the Category "A" Master of Science in Hydrographic Science Programme under the IHO-Republic of Korea (ROK) Programme of Technical Cooperation.

Moments of the Graduation Ceremony at USM

The ceremony was hosted by Dr Chris Winstead, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences of the USM, and moderated by Dr Anand D. Hiroji, Interim Program Coordinator, Hydrographic Sciences Associate Professor at USM. Twelve students graduated from the Category “A” Master of Science in Hydrographic Science this year, including the two students supported by the IHO-ROK Programme. Three more students graduated from the Category “B” Bachelor of Science in Marine Science. In addition to many officials from the USM, representatives from U.S. Navy, TSHOA, Mr Jongwook Choi, First Secretary of the ROK Embassy in the U.S., Rear Admiral Ron Piret Commander, Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command, and Commander (ret) Matt Borbash Deputy Hydrographer of the U.S. Navy attended the ceremony. The IHO Secretariat was represented by Director Luigi Sinapi.

Since 2000, the USM has been organizing the Category "A" Master of Science course in Hydrographic Science, recognized by the IBSC (FIG/IHO/ICA International Board on Standards of Competence for Hydrographic Surveyors and Nautical Cartographers). This year, IBSC has certified the Cat “A” Master in

Hydrography for other 6 years. The IHO-ROK Technical Cooperation Programme under the Memorandum of Understanding between the IHO and ROK commenced with supporting students to attend the course from 2013 to contribute to the IHO Capacity Building Programme. The number of successful graduate students from the programme totals 25, including the two from Greece and Nigeria (2024-2025 academic year), and from 15 IHO Member States (Bahrain, Bangladesh, Estonia, Greece, Guatemala, Jamaica, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Nigeria, Philippines, Romania, Thailand, Tunisia and Türkiye).



Hydrographic Science Graduate Candidates

GREYSON FOSTER MEYERS
B.S. Marine Science (Hydrography, Cat-II), The University of Southern Mississippi, USA, 2023

HELEN MARIE HOSTER
Lieutenant Junior Grade, U.S. Navy, Naval Oceanography Mine Warfare Center
B.S. Biology, Pennsylvania State University, USA, 2020

IOANNA PARRI
Lieutenant J.G. Hellenic Navy
Degree / Integrated M.Sc. in Surveying Engineering, A.U.TH., Greece, 2014
M.Sc. in Spatial Analysis, Planning and Management, A.U.TH., Greece, 2018
M.Sc. in H. R. Management, Communication and Leadership, UAV M.M., Greece, 2025

JANIA DINBAR
Naval Oceanographic Office, Hydrographic Department
B.S. Meteorology, Jackson State University, USA, 2021

JORDAN CHARLES MARKHAM
Lieutenant Commander, Royal New Zealand Navy
M.Sc. in Marine Science, University of Auckland, New Zealand, 2014
B.Sc. in Geography, University of Auckland, New Zealand, 2012

NINAH CONSTANTINOVNA FERROFF
Lieutenant, Royal Australian Navy
M.Sc. Chemistry, University of Wollongong, Australia, 2015
B.S. Forensic Biology and Chemistry, Deakin University, Australia, 2013

OLAYINKA MUSTAPHA OSHIKOYA
Graduate Assistant, Division of Marine Science, The University of Southern Mississippi
B.S. in Surveying and Geoinformatics, University of Lagos, Nigeria, 2019

ONOGATEOGHENE EGUVIE ZOGIE
Lieutenant, Nigerian Navy, National Hydrographic Agency
B.Eng. Mechanical Engineering, Nigerian Defence Academy, Nigeria, 2017

ORVEN DARE L MONTENEGRO
Lieutenant Junior Grade, SA OMETAC, Philippine Navy
Bachelor of Science, Philippine Military Academy, Philippines, 2018

PAUL SAUNDERS FRYE
B.S. Marine Science (Hydrography, Cat-II) Minor Geography, University of Southern Mississippi, USA, 2023

RAYMOND ARTHUR
B.Sc Geomatic Engineering, University of Mines and Technology, Ghana, 2019

TOLUWANI AKANDE
Graduate Assistant, Division of Marine Science, The University of Southern Mississippi
B.S. in Surveying and Geoinformatics, University of Lagos, Nigeria, 2021

Category "B" Certificate Recipients

ANDREW CASTLE
DAVID ZACH WILLIAMS
EVAN HUELSKAMP

WELCOME
DR. CHRIS WINSTEAD
Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, USM

INTRODUCTIONS
DR. ANAND D. HIRGI
Interim Program Coordinator, Hydrographic Sciences
Associate Professor, School of Ocean Science and Engineering, USM

KEYNOTE SPEECH
RDML RON PIRET
Commander, Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command

REMARKS
MR. JONG WOOK CHOI
First Secretary, Embassy of the Republic of Korea

RADM (ITALY) LUIGI SINAPI
Director, International Hydrographic Organization

GRADUATING STUDENT REMARKS
IOANNA PARRI
M.S., Hydrographic Science, Class of 2025

REMARKS ON THE 26TH GRADUATING CLASS
DR. LEILA HAMDAN
Professor and Associate Vice President Research, USM

REMARKS AND PRESENTATION OF THE
HYDROGRAPHER OF THE NAVY EDUCATION AWARD
MR. MATT BORBASH
Deputy Hydrographer of the Navy, U.S. Navy
Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command

PRESENTATION OF CATEGORY "A" AND "B" CERTIFICATES
DR. CHRIS WINSTEAD, RDML RON PIRET, RADM (ITALY) LUIGI SINAPI,
MR. JONG WOOK CHOI, MR. MATT BORBASH

CLOSING REMARKS
DR. ROBERT LEAF
Associate Professor and Director, School of Ocean Sciences and Engineering, USM

GROUP PHOTOS

RECEPTION

Hydrographic Science Program
at Southern Miss

The Joint International Hydrographic Applied Science Program (JIHASP), a cooperation between the University of Southern Mississippi and the U.S. Navy, Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command, is graduating its 26th class. This University of Southern Mississippi Master of Science degree in Hydrographic Science, approved by the Mississippi Board of Trustees of the State Institutions of Higher Learning in 1999, offers a rigorous, one-year degree. With the first class graduating in July 2000, the upcoming 2025 graduating class represents the successful completion of degree requirements by 246 students, including 82 international students from 37 different countries. This represents the 26th graduating class of a program that has matured into a world class education program in North America.

The program was designed in cooperation with the U.S. Navy to meet the Standards of Competence for Category 'A' Hydrographic Surveyors established by the International Board on Standards of Competence for Hydrographic Surveyors and Nautical Cartographers (ISC), of the International Federation of Surveyors, International Hydrographic Organization and the International Cartographic Association. The University of Southern Mississippi has the oldest program in the United States recognized at Category 'A'. The ISC subsequently and continuously recognizes the Hydrographic Science program to this day. The Hydrographic Science master's program is a demanding and intensive curriculum covering all aspects of hydrography and related sciences. It is core to the advanced requirements of the U.S. Navy and other federal agencies, and is sought out by government agencies and industry worldwide to meet their need for highly trained hydrographers.

In 2013, the IHO selected Southern Miss to educate hydrographers from developing nations. With the generous support from the Republic of Korea to cover all costs, 26 international graduates have benefited from this program.

In 2015 an emphasis area in Hydrographic Science was added to the Bachelor of Science degree in Marine Science and certified at the Category "B" level by the ISC, with the first graduate in 2019.

Hydrographers produce information that directly affects our daily lives, but we seldom see it, providing the geospatial backbone to all marine science, and maritime commerce, management and recreation. These Master of Science and the Bachelor of Science programs are the contribution of Southern Miss to strengthen the profession of hydrography, which helps ensure more sustainable uses of oceans, rivers and lakes for the common good of all people.

With heartfelt remembrance of Dr. David Wells, whose dedication to education and unwavering pursuit of excellence left a lasting mark on the hydrographic science programs at USM and the hydrographic community at large.

THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN
MISSISSIPPI

Hydrographic Science
Class of 2025
Recognition Ceremony
Wednesday, August 6, 2025
1 p.m.
Fleming Education Center Auditorium
Gulf Park Campus

Graduation (Recognition) Ceremony programme

Dr Chris Winstead, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences of the USM congratulated the graduates, commended the Joint International Hydrographic Applied Science Pro-gramme (JIHASP) as cooperation between the USM and the U.S. Navy, Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command, and highlighted the importance of the IHO-Republic of Korea (ROK) Programme of Technical Cooperation as a successful example of international cooperation.

Rear Admiral Ron Piret emphasized that hydrography is a vital resource for international diplomacy, extending far beyond the creation of nautical charts. He highlighted ongoing efforts to deepen our understanding of the ocean floor and stressed the crucial role of newly qualified hydrographers, who must approach their work with global awareness and innovative thinking. He finally commended the excellent performances of the University of Southern Mississippi and its teaching body.

First Secretary Mr. Jong Wook Choi from the ROK Embassy to the USA congratulated with the graduated students and their families for the passioned efforts in achieving the important recognition in hydrography, to contribute to the safety of navigation and the conservation and use of the oceans. He finally highlighted the spirit of collaboration of the three organizations (ROK, IHO and USM) behind the Category "A" Master of Science in Hydrographic Science.

Finally, IHO Director Luigi Sinapi expressed his gratitude to the USM and the Republic of Korea for their longstanding success with this program since the 2013-14 academic year, while also referencing the 2025 World Hydrography Day theme, "*Seabed Mapping: Enabling Ocean Action*". He noted that this theme captures the increasing recognition that mapping the ocean floor underpins every meaningful and informed decision concerning our oceans. Accurate hydrographic data is essential for science-based, resilient choices – whether in coastal development, maritime navigation, or the sustainable use of marine resources. Today, emerging hydrographers are joining a global network dedicated to shaping the future of our oceans: ensuring safe navigation, advancing sustainable development, supporting marine policymaking, and fueling future scientific breakthroughs. They bear the responsibility to apply their expertise with integrity, foster cross-disciplinary and international collaboration, and remain mindful that the mysteries beneath the surface profoundly influence life above.

Meeting with the graduates and visit to the USM facilities of Stennis Space Center

The ceremony was preceded (5th August) by a meeting with the students of the 2024-2025 Category "A" Master of Science in Hydrographic Science, who illustrated the two projects executed at the completion of the course, and then by a visit to the USM facilities at the Stennis Space Center in Mississippi. Dr Stephan Howden, Director Hydrographic Science Research Center of the USM and Dr Anand D. Hiroji, Interim Program Coordinator, Hydrographic Sciences Associate Professor illustrated the functions of the oceanographic support facility and the respective laboratories at the Stennis Space Center.

Photo:

Graduates of the Cat "A" Master and representatives from USM, IHO, ROK and US Navy

Next Graduation Ceremony of the Category "A" Master of Science in Hydrographic Science and Category "B" Bachelor of Science in Marine Science (Hydrography) will be held at the University of Southern Mississippi (USM), USA in August 2026 (date tbd).